

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
DECEMBER 7, 2017
7:30 PM**

OPENING STATEMENT: Mayor Stephen K. Pote called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A.10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG and a MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD.

ROLL CALL:

Joren [A] Black [P] Nehls [P] Gibbs [A] Mobus [P] Sopko [P]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 11 members of the public present

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Administration/Finance – No report was submitted. Mr. Atkins reported there is a meeting scheduled for next week and the main topic will be reviewing the RFP's which were received for professional services.
2. Police – In Councilwoman Joren's absence, no one else had anything to report.
3. Public Works/Buildings and Grounds – Councilman Nehls reported all snow equipment is ready for the winter season and approximately 200 tons of salt is on hand. He also said leaf pickup has ended as of November 30th. Catch basins have been repaired on Watchung Crest Drive and a new catch basin head was installed at upper parking lot at the Police Department; stone debris at intersections was removed and pothole repairs are ongoing. Councilman Nehls also reported dead trees were removed from Phillips Field driveway and at Orchard Road by Predator Tree Service. He also reported all sprinkler systems have been winterized, and fountains in both lakes were removed by November 28th.
4. Public Affairs:

Open Space – Councilman Sopko had no report.

Environmental – Councilman Sopko reported the Commission met on November 27th and it was the consensus of the members to forward to the Mayor and Council and the Buildings and Grounds Committee a suggestion to have small recycling bins placed at the upper parking lot for Styrofoam and dental debris. Councilman Nehls said if there is room at the Firehouse for these they could be placed by the receptacles that are already there. Councilman Sopko reported there is more damage than originally thought by the Emerald Ash Bore and there is no treatment that is guaranteed to work. Councilman Sopko said the State Department of Agriculture completed an exam of Watchung for gypsy moths and there is no evidence of eggs, therefore, no reason to spray this year. He also reminded everyone that the deer rutting season is still ongoing.

Recreation – Councilman Mobus said the Commission met last evening. He said the Rangers tickets for December 21st are sold out. The Commission also discussed the Harvest Festival and how to regulate the number of people attending, possibly signing in and issuing wrist bands. Councilman Mobus then reported the cost for the deck project at Phillips Field is much higher than originally anticipated. It is hoped this would be completed prior to opening day in April. Councilman Nehls asked if the Engineer gave a cost estimate and Councilman Nehls said no but the cost is close to \$40,000. Councilman Nehls asked if Little League can contribute monies toward this and suggested getting a proposal from Little League to see if the cost could be split.

Historical – Councilman Mobus reported a meeting will be held on December 20th. He reported the Commission received \$4,000 from the County Grant that Diddy Addario and Michelle DeRocco completed and applied for. He also said there are alternatives for the restoration of the mural which can be looked at to possibly save money on this.

Board of Health – Councilman Black reported the next meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2018 at 7:00 PM. He also said the members of the Board of Health would like to be included in any discussions regarding the legalization of marijuana if this is signed into law.

5. Fire – Mr. Atkins said he has spoken to a few members of the Department regarding the possibility of looking at the Berkeley Heights truck. He said Berkeley Heights would be happy to work with us to either come here or go to their site; he suggested December 16th. Councilman Mobus said there have been concerns about the construction progress at the Fire House. He said the contractors are unreliable and sloppy. Councilman Nehls asked if the Engineer has been notified of this and Mr. Atkins said he has and he is working on this.

6. Laws/Ordinances – No report was submitted.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – No report was submitted.

8. Police Chief – No report was submitted.

9. Fire Department – No report was submitted.

10. Rescue Squad – No report was submitted.

11. Emergency Management – No report was submitted.

12. Attorney – No report and no Executive meeting this evening.

13. Clerk – Ms. DeRocco reported there are several new businesses in the triangle area and it has been suggested that she arrange a “ribbon cutting” ceremony on December 16th, bringing some awareness and to make sure residents know they are there. Mayor Pote said he will confirm that he is available for that date. Ms. DeRocco also suggested the Echoes take pictures of this event.

14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins said R2 on tonight’s agenda is authorizing Mayor Pote and Clerk Michelle DeRocco to sign the land lease agreement with Weldon which will be in effect for 25 years. He said a salt storage area will be constructed on the site along with storage for some other DPW materials.

Mayor Pote thanked the administration for the great job setting up the Volunteer Dinner which was enjoyed by all who attended. He also thanked the Rescue Squad and Emergency Services for the 27th annual tree lighting ceremony which was very well done and attended. Bill Ripley and Henry Long were honored at the event. Mayor Pote said the library discussion will be continued in January and if needed a special meeting would be held if the State Grant application is ready.

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PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive asked if the Exempt Hall has ever been considered for the Library. Mayor Pote responded that it would be worth looking into.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda items listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

Approval of the following Council minutes:

November 2, 2017 - Regular Session
November 20, 2017 / Special Meeting – Regular and Executive Sessions
November 20, 2017 / Regular Meeting

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Board of Health Minutes – June 21, 2017
Building Department Report – November 2017
Bd of Adjustment Minutes – August 10, 2017
Planning Board Minutes – July 18, 2017

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #63- PSE&G 11/27/17 Notice of Filing and Public Hearings / Approval of Electric Base Rate Adjustments c: M & C, TEA, Post
- #64- Warren Township Sewerage Authority 12/1/17 Notice of Public Hearing on 12/13/17 To Consideration of Revision to the Sewer Service Fees c: M & C, TEA, TH

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda Resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

- R1:12/07/17 Purchases Over \$2,000. – Hertrich Fleet Services (PD / Vehicle)
Lawsoft, Inc. (PD / Maintenance & Support CAD)
- R2: Authorize Mayor and Clerk to Sign Land Lease Agreement / Salt Storage Dome
at Weldon
- R3: Resolution to Revise and Update Police Department Off Duty Fees
- R4: Waive Chapter 2-25.10 of the Code and Purchase Over \$2,000. – The Brooklyn
Press
- R5: Authorize Treasurer to Redeem Tax Sale Certificate #14-10 / 95 Tuttle Road
- R6: Authorize Return of Tax Overpayment / 35 Jared Court
- R7: Authorize Treasurer to Redeem Tax Sale Certificate #15-03 / 109 Valley Road

NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: Items listed below will be individually addressed and acted upon accordingly. Council reserves the right to refer an item to Committee for further review and discussion.

Councilman Mobus moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

- R8:12/07/17 Authorize 2017 Budget Transfers

Councilman Mobus moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Sopko and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

- R9: Payment of Bills

PUBLIC PORTION

Joan Tak, High Tor Drive, said she has concerns about a house that is being used as an Air B&B on Ridge Road. The owners rent this home out and there could be as many as 100 people at a party. She said there has been an increase of robberies in the area and asked if anything can be done to control this. Attorney Albert Cruz said this should be referred to the Zoning Officer. Mr. Atkins will give Ms. Tak Mr. Bennett’s contact information.

Virginia Hartmann, Ellisen Road, asked when a decision on the library would be made, which decision is made first – the Grant application submission, or the decision to have a library? Mayor Pote said he and the Council must have discussions on this and would like a decision by the end of January. Ms. Hartmann asked will there be a decision, yes or no, before the application comes out, and Mayor Pote said it is hoped a decision is made prior to that.

Diddy Addario, Rock Avenue, thanked Mayor Pote for his kind words for the Tree of Lights Ceremony. She also said Don Monetti’s speech is in the Echoes and suggested everyone should read it.

Tom Franklin, Wildwood Terrace, said there was a suggestion that a referendum for the library be placed on the general election but he said this would be way too late for state funds. He said the Council are the elected officials and they should make a decision. He also said the 9000 sq.ft. which is suggested on one of the site plans is way too small, there is a need for a much larger community room.

Maria Alberto, Acorn Drive, asked if the leaf pick up has ended and Councilman Nehls said it has. She also said the Air B&B on Ridge Road is a real issue and should be looked at. Ms. Alberto also said there are more important things to be done in the Borough than a new Library.

Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive, this is the second time the Air B&B issue has been brought up. She said there is no Ordinance preventing this. Mayor Pote said this needs to be looked at.

Tom Franklin, Wildwood Terrace, said if there are more important things to address than a library, he would like to see that list.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled Council Reorganization meeting to be held on on Thursday, January 4, 2018 at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance
Deputy Clerk